Expensive Promise in a Political Year

September 15, 2026

President Trump has famously promised to give $5,000 to every American adult citizen if his party wins majorities in both the House and the Senate. But the immediate question was: what would that cost, and how would it affect the federal deficit?

The math is pretty simple; giving $5,000 to every adult American citizen would cost roughly $1.2 trillion. That's more than the Pentagon's entire annual budget request $961 billion), and would materially increase the national debt, currently sitting at $40 trillion. It would nearly double this year's annual budget deficit of $1.8 trillion.

How would the government pay for it? The argument is that it would be paid out of US tariff revenue, which the government collects on imported goods, with some or all of the cost added to prices in the store. That amounts to roughly $400 billion during the 2026 fiscal year—about a third of the total cost that the President is promising. And economists who believe that customs duties are an indirect tax on consumers have noted that this amounts to taking money from American families in order to give it back to them through another venue.

It's worth mentioning that the President discussed a $2,000 payment directly to American families earlier this year, but most of us are still waiting for the check. He and Elon Musk also floated a proposal to send $5,000 to American taxpayers in the form of a DOGE dividend. That check never arrived either. Anybody who is alarmed that this 'Trump Dividend' proposal would do further damage to the nation's finances might want to relax.

Sources:

https://www.euronews.com/business/2026/09/10/the-trump-dividend-what-5000-would-cost-and-what-it-could-cover

https://www.forbes.com/sites/maryroeloffs/2026/09/10/trump-keeps-promising-cash-to-americans-but-they-havent-gotten-any/

If you have any questions about this article or want to discuss your family finances, investment portfolio, or financial planning advice, please call on me anytime at my number (215) 325-1595 or you can click here to schedule a meeting.

Please feel free to forward this article and offer to anyone you know who might have financial questions or need some unbiased advice. Most financial advice is sales advice. In stark contrast, we are fee-only (non-commissioned) fiduciary advisors. We just provide truthful, unbiased advice to our clients.

Jeffrey Broadhurst
MBA, CFA, CFP
Broadhurst Financial Advisors, Inc.

*****PRIVACY NOTICE*****

Our physical and mail address:
1911 West Point Pike
P.O. Box 301
West Point, PA 19486-0301

Contact us:
Phone: (215) 325-1595
Email: jeff@broadhurstfinancial.com